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Summary record of the 6th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 7 October 1999, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Kiwanuka (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Uganda)

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In the absence of Mr. Zackheos (Cyprus), Mr. Kiwanuka (Uganda), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 18: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Territories not covered under other agenda items) (*continued*) (A/54/23 (Part II), chaps. VI, IX-XI, A/54/23 (Part III), chap. XIII (D-F, H)), A/AC.109/1999/1, A/AC.109/1999/3-9, A/AC.109/1999/11, A/AC.109/1999/13-18, A/C.4/54/L.3 and L.4)

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Agenda item 12: Report of the Economic and Social Council (*continued*) (A/54/3, chap. VII, sect. D)

Agenda item 95: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*) (A/54/267, A/C.4/54/L.5)

1. **Ms. Cortes** (Spain) said that once again her delegation was calling for an end to the colonial situation in Gibraltar. The General Assembly had clearly indicated how the decolonization of Gibraltar should be carried out.

2. There was no single prescription for putting an end to colonialism, since the circumstances varied in each situation. In most cases, decolonization had been achieved through the exercise of the right of self-determination. However, that principle did not apply in all cases. Although Gibraltar was a colony of the United Kingdom, its inhabitants were not a colonized people, but were the descendants of the colonizing people and of people who had been brought in to work in the military base. It would therefore be unacceptable and contradictory to apply the principle of self-determination in order to perpetuate the colonial situation. That was the sense of General Assembly resolution 2353 (XXII), paragraph 2.

3. The international community, and consequently General Assembly resolutions, including resolutions 1514 (XV) and 2625 (XXV), had set certain limits on the application of the principle of self-determination, namely respect for the national unity and territorial integrity of States. That applied to colonies established in the territory and at the expense of other States. In such cases, decolonization was achieved by re-establishing the territorial integrity of the State in question. The full applicability of the principle of territorial integrity to the decolonization of Gibraltar was a clear and unequivocal doctrine of the United Nations, expressed in successive resolutions, including resolutions 2353 (XXII) and 2429 (XXIII).

4. A modernization or reform of the so-called "constitution" of Gibraltar promulgated by the United Kingdom in 1969 would only aggravate the problems. Spain would oppose any initiative which would impede the result envisaged in the Treaty of Utrecht. The transfer of responsibilities to the local authorities might nullify the sovereignty of the administering Power over the Rock, but not its sovereignty over the illegally occupied isthmus.

5. Under the Treaty of Utrecht, Spain had been forced to cede sovereignty of Gibraltar to the United Kingdom, but had always respected it by virtue of the principle *pacta sunt servanda*, even though the treaty violated Spain's national unity and territorial integrity. The validity of the Treaty was recognized by the United Kingdom and Spain, as well as by the United Nations. Thus, Gibraltar could be British or Spanish, but any other option was excluded.

6. Spain had deep respect for the rights of the people of Gibraltar. However, that did not make them a nation with sovereign rights. Sovereignty over the Territory of Gibraltar could be discussed by only the two sovereign States in dispute, the United Kingdom, as the colonial Power, and Spain, since the colony was situated in Spanish territory.

7. Gibraltar lacked natural resources and arable land. Its economy was based on its special fiscal situation within the European Union, making it a parasite which survived at the expense of Spain and to the detriment of the neighbouring Spanish territory. Gibraltar's economy could not rest on corrupt foundations. Gibraltar had to establish a sound and solid economy, in full accordance with the directives and regulations of the European Union.

8. Spain was participating in the Brussels process in good faith, and had submitted two proposals as starting points to

try to find a solution to the dispute over Gibraltar. Despite the goodwill of successive Spanish Governments, no progress had been made. There was only one course to follow: serious negotiations which would put an end to Gibraltar's colonial situation, since the maintenance of the status quo benefited no one. Spain continued to advocate that dialogue. The inhabitants of Gibraltar had nothing to fear. On many occasions the Spanish authorities had expressed their full intention to ensure due respect for the legitimate interests of the population of Gibraltar. Spain hoped that the United Kingdom would finally realize that, if it wanted its relations with Spain to reach their full potential, it could not continue its colonial presence in Gibraltar.

9. **Mr. Baeisa** (Republic of Yemen) said that as the new millennium approached, the spectre of colonialism had been nearly banished from the world, thanks in large measure to the United Nations. The eradication of colonialism and the right of self-determination were prominent features of the Charter, in recognition of the fact that respecting the right of peoples to choose their own destiny served to foster the advent of peace, justice and prosperity.

10. But while the old colonialism had been reduced to a few scattered pockets, new forms had arisen. Peoples were still denied the right of self-determination: the Palestinian people had been denied that right for over half a century.

11. Referring to the Committee's reports on, *inter alia*, Western Sahara and Gibraltar, he expressed the hope that all such issues would be resolved peacefully. Concerning East Timor, the Government of Indonesia was to be commended for its cooperation with the United Nations in organizing the recent referendum and in accepting the subsequent deployment of an international force to put an end to the violence and bring peace to the region.

12. Military bases and facilities in formerly colonized regions adversely affected not only the interests of the peoples of those regions but also those of neighbouring States. What small, poor, recently independent countries needed was assistance that would help them build up their infrastructure and develop.

13. Many formally independent countries were really in a state of dependence because of a growing burden of indebtedness, dwindling official development assistance, and the negative impact of globalization and market liberalization, all aggravated by the imposition of standard political, economic and social models that took no account of differences in identity, culture, degree of development and the like. The international community should help those countries accede to true independence by providing assistance at all levels.

14. **Mr. Aboul Gheit** (Egypt) remarked that it had been 39 years since the General Assembly's adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Much had been achieved in that time, but there were still 17 Territories that had not been able to exercise the right of self-determination, and it was for the United Nations to enable them to do so. At the same time, administering Powers should assume their responsibilities by cooperating with the Special Committee in that connection, so that, at the dawn of the new millennium, colonialism might be eradicated once and for all.

15. In the meantime, administering Powers should take a constructive attitude by providing the Committee with such information as it might require and facilitating the work of its missions. Moreover, administering Powers should recognize that peoples that had not yet been able to exercise the right of self-determination nevertheless had legal sovereignty over their natural resources.

16. Noteworthy progress had been achieved in relation to the question of Western Sahara. It was to be hoped that the contending parties would continue to cooperate with the United Nations, and that the referendum to determine the future of the area could soon be held. As for East Timor, while the violence that had followed the referendum had been appalling, the international community should not forget the courageous decision of President Habibie and the Indonesian Government to hold that referendum in the first place. The present period was one of transition. Whatever the final outcome, it should not be regarded as a victory for one side and a defeat for the other.

17. Egypt had been a founding member of the United Nations, and had been in the forefront of the struggle against colonialism. It intended to remain true to its tradition in that respect by continuing to devote its efforts to the attainment of the full implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

18. **Mr. El Riani** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) expressed support for peoples that had as yet been unable to exercise the right of self-determination. It was to be hoped that those peoples' territories would not be turned into grounds for the military activities of the occupying States.

19. The Special Committee could be proud of its efforts to implement the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. In that connection, the Caribbean Regional Seminar on small island non-self-governing territories held in Saint Lucia in May 1999 had made a number of useful recommendations aimed at poverty alleviation, economic growth, environmental

protection and natural resource management in such territories.

20. However, in some Territories the will of the international community was being deliberately flouted; efforts were being made to empty them of their original inhabitants and establish settlements with a view to altering their natural and demographic characteristics. The Special Committee should do everything in its power to put a stop to such unlawful efforts.

21. In sum, his delegation advocated the eradication of colonialism and affirmed the right of self-determination. Greater economic assistance, bilateral or multilateral, should be made available to Non-Self-Governing Territories and small island States, and their products should enjoy ready access to world markets. Their acquisition of technology should be facilitated, as should their development of their water resources, human resources and tourist potential. Nuclear States should desist from polluting the sea by the dumping of hazardous wastes. Foreign military bases should not be located in Non-Self-Governing Territories. The peoples of those Territories should be left free to choose the form of democracy they deemed suitable in terms of their cultural heritage and degree of development. The United Nations Development Programme and international investors should implement industrial and agricultural development projects in such Territories, so that their raw materials could be processed into manufactured goods locally. Lastly, no assistance should be made available for the purpose of establishing settlements in Non-Self-Governing Territories to the detriment of the interests of their original inhabitants.

22. **Mr. Fadaifard** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that it was unfortunate that at the end of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the decolonization process had not yet been concluded. Efforts should be redoubled to achieve the aim of a world free of colonial domination. The people of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories must be given the opportunity to exercise their right to choose their own future freely, as envisaged in the Charter.

23. His delegation supported the Special Committee's initiative to seek ways and means of facilitating constructive dialogue with the administering Powers in order to speed up decolonization. The international community should stress the need for the administering Powers to transmit information under Article 73 *e* of the Charter, foster awareness of the right of self-determination in Non-Self-Governing Territories, abandon all military activities in those Territories, participate actively in the work of the Special Committee, invite visiting missions to the Territories, and facilitate the participation of representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the work of the Committee. The General Assembly should attach the utmost importance to the visiting missions as a means of collecting first-hand information on conditions in the Non-Self-Governing Territories and on the wishes of the people concerning their future status.

24. The international community should renew its support for the aspirations of the people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, and should formulate concrete proposals for measures that could be taken to enable them to exercise their right to self-determination.

25. **Mr. de Moura** (Brazil) said that his delegation fully subscribed to the statements made by Mexico, on behalf of the Rio Group, and Uruguay, on behalf of the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR). It reiterated the deep consternation of the Brazilian people about the violence and loss of life in East Timor. Brazil fully supported international efforts to ensure respect for the implementation of East Timor's right to self-determination, and was contributing to the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET). It fully supported the Secretary-General's proposal for a transitional administration and was ready to contribute, within its possibilities, to the success of that mission.

26. Brazil reiterated its commitment to the legitimate rights of the Argentine people in their sovereignty dispute over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), and hoped that a solution would be found to the issue soon in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the Organization of American States.

27. **Mr. Tekaya** (Tunisia) said that as the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism drew to an end, there was a need to evaluate the achievements made and consider the remaining steps which needed to be taken. The Special Committee had an important role to play in that respect. Tunisia welcomed the dialogue between the Special Committee and the administering Powers, and hoped that it would be further enhanced so as to enable the Special Committee to carry out its mandate more fully. The contribution of representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to the evaluation of the situation of those Territories remained essential.

28. There was a need to promote awareness among the peoples concerned of their rights and options so that they could make a free and informed choice about their future status. The cooperation of the administering Powers, and their provision of information to the Secretary-General, were very important in that respect. Seminars and visiting

missions were important means of assisting the population in exercising its right to self-determination. The majority of the Non-Self-Governing Territories were small island territories, and that situation needed to be taken into account. The responsibility of the administering Powers and the role of the United Nations system in the promotion of sustainable development and of the process of self-determination were essential. The international community needed to redouble its efforts to complete the work of decolonization.

29. **Mr. Kuindwa** (Kenya) commended the Special Committee for its untiring efforts to eliminate the remaining vestiges of colonialism and for the work achieved through its visiting missions and seminars to review the progress in implementing the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, an approach which would enable the people of the remaining 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories to choose freely the options available to them in deciding on their respective destinies. He supported the Special Committee's plan to re-evaluate its work methods and the effectiveness of its implementation strategies with a view to providing more clarity and focus. All administering Powers should continue their cooperation with the Special Committee, and inadequate political, economic, social and educational preparedness should not delay the exercise of the rights to self-determination and independence.

30. In view of the significant progress made in the identification process in Western Sahara, he remained hopeful that the outstanding issues would be addressed during the next round of talks with the relevant parties. He also hoped that arrangements for implementation of the repatriation programme would be swiftly finalized between the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and the two parties. The demining of sites for the repatriation of refugees eligible to vote, their immediate families and other Saharan residents outside the Territory could then be completed. Since it was essential to consolidate the achievements made by addressing the remaining political and operational issues in a balanced and careful manner, he encouraged the parties concerned to continue their cooperation with the United Nations with a view to creating an enabling atmosphere for the referendum to be held as planned.

31. He commended the Indonesian Government for allowing the international community to send a multinational force to restore order in East Timor and welcomed its commitment to fulfil the newly expressed will of the East Timorese people to seek a new destiny. The progress already achieved by UNAMET was encouraging, and he hoped that it would progressively create conditions for stability in the rest of the territory and enable the East Timorese people to realize their right to self-determination. In conclusion, he reiterated his commitment to the work of the Committee and remained optimistic that the remaining issues would be resolved in a manner acceptable to all concerned.

32. **Mr. Naidu** (Fiji), referring to Chapter XI of the Charter of the United Nations, said that his delegation shared the concern of many others that the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories remained unfulfilled after 54 years. It was also concerned over issues relating to the treatment and protection of the indigenous peoples of the Territories, the erosion of their traditional culture and the slow pace of economic, social and human development in the Territories. It was even more concerned by the slow promotion and facilitation of self-government and by the fact that the utmost effort had not been made to ascertain the free and voluntary choice of the peoples on the political future of their Territories.

33. It was a sad comment on democracy that all forms and guises of colonialism would not have been eradicated by the year 2000. In that connection, he was concerned over the lack of substantial progress in the determination of the free and voluntary choice of the peoples on the political future of their Territories and the full implementation of choice. Such progress would be made only when the administering Powers cooperated fully with the Special Committee with a view to resolving the issue. Thus far, the informal dialogue with the Special Committee had not significantly contributed to resolving the political future of the Territories, and he therefore called upon the administering Powers to participate more actively in its work. They should also facilitate visits to the Territories by United Nations missions and devote more urgent attention to programmes aimed at promoting political, educational, social and human development in the Territories, in which connection the people should be fully consulted. The special rights of the indigenous peoples in the Territories must be guaranteed, protected and enhanced, and their traditions and culture respected.

34. The genuine steps taken to advance the decolonization process in certain Territories, such as Tokelau, New Caledonia, Western Sahara and East Timor, were laudable. Despite the atrocities that had occurred in the latter case, the decision of the people should be respected and carried forward by the international community, which should learn from the experience and be fully prepared in the event of similar referendums to be held elsewhere. Such referendums and plebiscites provided the best form for expression of the free and voluntary choice of the peoples on the political future of their Territories, such as independent statehood,

free association or integration. The administering Powers which had not scheduled referendums in their Territories must commence dialogue with the peoples concerned with a view to agreeing a time-frame, as well as terms and conditions, in that connection. In conclusion, he said that the Special Committee should be provided with adequate resources in order to enhance its role, prepare and negotiate a new mandate on decolonization and strengthen the political will to hasten the pace of decolonization.

35. **Mr. Larrain** (Chile) associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group, but wished to make a few additional observations.

36. Chile welcomed the agreements of 5 May 1999 between Indonesia and Portugal on the subject of East Timor. It had followed closely and with concern the events that had taken place prior to the holding of the popular consultation and regretted the violence that had followed the announcement of the results. It nevertheless appreciated the decision of the Government of Indonesia to accept international cooperation in order to restore order and security in the Territory.

37. Chile was concerned at the obstacles that remained to the holding of the referendum on self-determination in Western Sahara and hoped that the referendum would finally take place in accordance with the timetable established by the Secretary-General. It welcomed the progress that had been achieved in the identification process and appealed to the parties to continue to cooperate with MINURSO in the appeals process.

38. Concerning New Caledonia, his Government welcomed the signing of the Nouméa Accord and the fact that, in fulfilment of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 53/65, France had invited representatives of countries of the Pacific region, including Chile, to the Territory to familiarize them with the process that had been initiated under the Accord.

39. On the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), his delegation supported the statement made by the delegation of Uruguay and wished to reaffirm its conviction that there should be a peaceful and negotiated solution to the dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom, in conformity with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Special Committee.

40. Despite the fact that the General Assembly had declared the period 1990-2000 as the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, since 1984 no Non-Self-Governing Territory on the Special Committee's agenda had exercised its right to self-determination. As a result, the members of the Special Committee and the administering Powers had agreed on a set of informal guidelines for developing a plan of action that would go beyond the year 2000. Under that plan, the wishes of the populations of the Non-Self-Governing Territories would be faithfully determined and a specific programme of work developed for each Territory. The plan represented a significant step forward and would permit further progress to be made towards the noble objective of decolonization based on cooperation between the Special Committee, the administering Powers and the respective governments of the 12 small Territories. In that connection, the formal cooperation in which the Committee had been engaged for some time with New Zealand illustrated how it was possible to work together with the administering Powers.

41. **Mr. Snoussi** (Morocco) said that the question of Western Sahara was concerned not with decolonization but rather with a referendum to complete the territorial integrity of Morocco. It was only after the so-called Western Sahara had been ceded back to Morocco following negotiations with the Government of Spain that, in circumstances that were known to all, a handful of rebels had forcibly taken control of a part of the population and conspired against Morocco's territorial integrity. Morocco had foiled the plot, but had nevertheless proposed that a referendum should be held under the auspices of the United Nations to settle the matter once and for all. It had since provided moral and material support to MINURSO and had invested considerable resources in developing the Territory's infrastructure and in bringing living standards up to the level that existed in the rest of the Kingdom.

42. Persons who were either ill-intentioned or ill-informed had been falsely claiming that Morocco was responsible for the delay in the holding of the referendum. It sufficed to consult the various reports which the Secretary-General had prepared on the question since 1991 to see that the opposite was true. Morocco had also been accused of delaying the implementation of the protocols and of the "package deal" proposed by the Secretary-General. In fact, the "package deal" concerned only Morocco's 65,000 applicants. His Government had been obliged to negotiate the criteria for their identification, with which it was still not satisfied.

43. On the question of refugees, Morocco had long been calling attention to the abduction of the so-called refugees, who were paraded in their camps abroad for the benefit of visiting delegations. The so-called brave fighters, who still held thousands of children hostage in their training camps, should realize that the cold war was over and that it was time to return the children to their homes. He did not understand,

moreover, why those refugees who had already been identified had not yet been repatriated. Morocco was prepared to accept all refugees who were allowed to return home. Recognizing the need for transparency, it had also requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to station a team in the region and had agreed to the confidence-building measures proposed by UNHCR.

44. The right to self-determination must not be denied to any section of the Saharan population. It was impossible to speak of self-determination, for example, if tribal groups who had fought against colonialism were rejected en masse by the Identification Commission. The criteria for participation in the referendum should be logical and reasonable and should include both ties of blood and ties to the Territory. Unfortunately, it was becoming increasingly apparent that the parties were heading towards a referendum that was undemocratic and inequitable. Morocco nevertheless continued to hope that the errors committed would be corrected in the near future.

45. In response to the concerns expressed by the representative of Mexico, speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, he wished to clarify that the incident in Laayoune to which the representative had referred had in fact been a student demonstration over material and social demands and that no deaths had resulted.

46. Morocco solemnly reaffirmed that it would do everything possible to ensure that the referendum, which it had proposed in good faith, took place in a democratic, equitable and transparent manner. No administrative, routine or financial contingency could be invoked, however, to deny the entire population the right to express its wishes freely.

47. **Mr. Diop** (Senegal) said that, even though the process of decolonization had increased the size of the family of nations from 51 to 188 States in the space of a single generation, there was no room for complacency. Vigilance was still needed and every opportunity must be taken to encourage dialogue between the administering Powers and the representatives of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, in keeping with the spirit of cooperation that had been witnessed in the cases of New Caledonia, Tokelau and East Timor.

48. The Committee should value reason over passion and refrain from drawing a parallel between Western Sahara and East Timor. The testimony of petitioners notwithstanding, it was clear that the language of decolonization was not applicable to Western Sahara, where a process of consultation of the people was under way. In fact, Morocco had no lessons to be taught about the struggle for emancipation and independence in Africa or about human rights. The Committee should therefore encourage the two parties to cooperate with a view to the holding of a free, transparent and impartial referendum, in accordance with the United Nations Settlement Plan for Western Sahara and with the participation of all persons native to the Territory.

49. **Mr. Salamanca** (Bolivia) said that his delegation associated itself with the statements made by the representatives of Mexico, in his capacity as coordinator of the Rio Group, and of Uruguay, on behalf of MERCOSUR and the associated States of Bolivia and Chile, but wished to make a few additional observations.

50. The United Nations had played a key role in the historic and political process of decolonization. Despite the considerable progress that had been achieved, however, the populations of the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories remaining on the agenda of the Special Committee still aspired to independence and the right to self-determination. As the new millennium dawned, Bolivia hoped that the United Nations might soon be able to proclaim a world free of colonial vestiges, free of oppression and economic, political and social dependency and respectful of democratic values and fundamental human rights.

51. His Government followed attentively and in some cases with concern the efforts being made to achieve self-determination and independence in a number of Non-Self-Governing Territories. Each situation required a different approach and genuine political will by the parties concerned. Bolivia was concerned at the reaction to the vote by the people of East Timor, whose clearly expressed desire for independence must be respected and translated into reality with the full cooperation of the international community. If not, the image of the United Nations, which had supported the process of popular consultation, would suffer grave harm.

52. In Western Sahara, he hoped that the identification process would move forward without delay within the time limits set for the holding of the referendum. The recent outbreak of violence, which had resulted in deaths and injuries among the civilian population, gave cause for concern.

53. The way in which New Zealand had dealt with the case of Tokelau, on the other hand, was an example of political will to resolve the colonial status of a Territory which took into account the needs and aspirations of the local population.

54. In New Caledonia, a peaceful and gradual process of emancipation was unfolding within an institutional

framework agreed upon by the parties. In that regard, the spirit and letter of the Matignon and Nouméa Accords must be respected so as not to betray the hopes of the people of the Territory.

55. Concerning the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), his Government hoped that the United Kingdom and Argentina would seek a peaceful solution to their dispute, as the General Assembly and the Special Committee had urged in their relevant resolutions.

56. Bolivia welcomed the cooperation being given by some administering Powers to the process of decolonization. It also welcomed the dialogue which had just begun in the Special Committee on the possibility of considering directly the situation of the Non-Self-Governing Territories under that Committee's jurisdiction. The exchange of ideas in the Special Committee aimed at developing new conceptual approaches to decolonization would move the international community closer to the goals proclaimed in the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, which, given the considerable work that remained to be done in that area, should be extended beyond the year 2000.

57. Lastly, in view of the general lack of information and the difficulty of organizing visits to the Non-Self-Governing Territories, regional seminars might be a useful way of disseminating information on the social and constitutional situation of the Territories and their populations.

58. **Mr. Fils-Aime** (Haiti) said that his delegation fully supported the statement made by Saint Lucia on behalf of the Caribbean Community.

59. The United Nations had contributed effectively to the decolonization of over 80 Territories since the end of the Second World War. The remaining 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories must not be marginalized or abandoned to their fate under any pretext; their two million inhabitants had the right to choose and manage their own future, protect their environment and natural resources, and preserve and propagate their traditions and culture.

60. In accordance with the principles laid down by the General Assembly in resolution 1541 (XV), autonomy and protection of the inalienable rights of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories did not necessarily mean accession to independence. His delegation called on the administering Powers to create the necessary conditions to enable the people of their respective Territories to make a judicious choice with regard to self-determination, without constraints imposed by the administering Powers or by rebel leaders pursuing their personal agendas.

61. His delegation encouraged the organization of seminars in the Caribbean and Pacific regions as the best way of assessing the needs of small island Territories and consulting with the inhabitants of the Territories and their elected representatives, the administering Powers, and other parties involved.

62. Haiti welcomed East Timor's vote for independence. It hoped that the Government of Indonesia would do everything in its power to ensure respect for the wishes and aspirations of that people.

63. His delegation reiterated its support for the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

64. **Mr. Bandora** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the performance of the United Nations in the decolonization process had been most exemplary. It was therefore ironic that, with the exception of the encouraging advances in Tokelau and New Caledonia, little meaningful progress had been made during the last phase of that process. On the whole, the attitudes of the administering Powers remained unchanged, thus demanding greater resolve and commitment by the United Nations to advocate the right of the people in the Territories to self-determination. He hoped that continuing dialogue with the Special Committee, which was critical to furthering the cause of self-determination for those people, would be deepened and expanded to include all administering Powers with a view to ending decolonization early in the new century. It was in the interests of those Powers to manifest their cooperation by welcoming visiting missions and submitting reports as required under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations.

65. Until the people in the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories were given the opportunity to determine their status in a transparent and internationally supervised arrangement, his delegation would continue to view with great scepticism any claim that they did not wish to exercise their right to self-determination. Given that special attention needed to be devoted to the problems faced by small island developing States, the administering Powers and the United Nations should endeavour to expand their assistance programmes to the Territories, which fell largely under that category. The enjoyment of greater autonomy in decision-making in connection with the exploitation and management of natural resources and generated earnings was also a critical step in preparing the Territories for the eventual exercise of their right to self-determination.

66. His delegation was seriously concerned over the situation in Western Sahara, and hoped that the appeals process would be handled expeditiously and that all

difficulties would be resolved to enable the scheduled referendum to be held. The United Nations should maintain vigilance and take measures to arrest the deteriorating security situation in Laayoune with a view to avoiding a negative impact on the referendum and a repetition of the tragic events witnessed in East Timor. While regretting those events, his Government nevertheless welcomed the Agreements reached on 5 May 1999 by the Governments of Indonesia and Portugal and the United Nations and hoped that normalcy would soon be re-established, thus enabling the wishes of the East Timorese people to be achieved. With a view to realizing the dream of a world free from colonialism early next century, he called on the administering Powers of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories to join the international community and allow the people in those Territories to exercise their right of self-determination.

67. **Mr. Andjaba** (Namibia) said that, taking place as it did at the threshold of the new millennium, the current session provided an opportunity for reflection on the progress achieved by Member States in assisting those who continued to yearn for self-determination and national independence. The almost fourfold increase in the membership of the United Nations since its inception was attributable to the commitment and dedication of Member States to the principle of self-determination and national independence contained in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which had enabled his own country to gain its independence in 1990. With the necessary political will, the objectives of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism could still be realized.

68. His delegation expressed its profound admiration to the Indonesian Government for its courage and wisdom in allowing the referendum to take place in East Timor, sad though the subsequent events were, and sincerely hoped that the presence of the multinational force would pave the way for the final destiny of the people in East Timor. It also commended the Frente Polisario and the Moroccan Government for their flexibility and cooperation, which should similarly pave the way towards peaceful settlement of the conflict. It was, however, concerned by the growing number of appeals in connection with the referendum, and hoped that they would not lead to a second round of the identification process which would delay the referendum even further. The parties concerned should cooperate fully with the United Nations with a view to successful implementation of the settlement plan devised by the Organization of African Unity, which would enable the Saharan people to exercise their inalienable rights to self-determination and national independence.

69. **Ms. Smith** (United Kingdom), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said, with reference to the observations made by the representative of Spain concerning Gibraltar, that her Government's position on the matter was well known and had recently been reiterated by the representative of the United Kingdom in exercise of the right of reply to the statement made in the General Assembly on 21 September 1999 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain.

70. With regard to the statements made earlier by the representatives of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile and Iraq concerning the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), the United Kingdom's position on that matter was also well known and had recently been restated by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made in the General Assembly on 21 September 1999 by the President of Argentina. The Permanent Representative's statement was contained in document A/54/420.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.